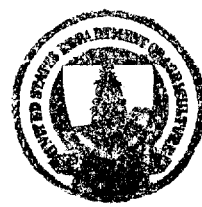




U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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CONSERVATION OF WILD LIFE
PRESENTS COMPLEX PROBLEMS

To protect the lives of the useful or harmless wild animals and birds of the country and at the same time to guard growing crops and livestock against depredations of injurious wild life is the complex problem in conservation which the Biological Survey of the United States Department of Agriculture is constantly facing and attempting to solve. The services of this bureau become more important as time goes on and the scope of its organization is enlarging accordingly. Especially has this been the case during the fiscal year ended June 30, 1925, according to the annual report of the chief of the Biological Survey.

The increasing occupation and development of the United States, says Doctor Nelson, make it increasingly difficult to maintain even a fair representation of the once enormous natural resources in game and fur-bearing animals and game and insectivorous birds in this country. At the same time, the wide-spread herds of domestic stock and the extension of the farming areas have given predatory animals and harmful rodents of many species an abundant food supply, under the influence of which their numbers increase and necessitate active control.

To accomplish the varied tasks involved in these problems calls for field and laboratory investigational work by trained specialists, and the maintenance of warden service to safeguard Federal wild-life refuges and to enforce Federal game laws, as well as a force to conduct field campaigns to control wild animal and occasional bird pests.

The economic phases of the bureau's work have included operations for the control of predatory animals, chiefly in the West. Skilled hunters have been detailed to take these destructive animals wherever they occur, and to patrol borders especially in Arizona and New Mexico for animals coming across the international boundary. That predatory animals have been considerably reduced in numbers is shown by the fact that 352 wolves were taken, 37,255 coyotes, 228 mountain lions, 2,945 bobcats, and 61 Canada lynxes. In addition probably twice as many coyotes were killed in poisoning campaigns. Measures to reduce the numbers of coyotes and bobcats have also served to check the spread of rabies, which is carried by these animals. In cooperation with State extension services and other State and private organizations, constant warfare is waged by the Biological Survey against injurious rodents, which consume vast quantities of grain and grasses in the West.

The study and conservation of fur-bearing animals, for many years one of the projects of the bureau, has been since July 1, 1924, designated as a separate division of fur resources. Under this division is maintained an experimental fur farm at Saratoga Springs, N. Y., for investigational work in the propagation of fur-bearing animals in captivity.

The Alaska game law, passed by the last session of the 68th Congress, provided for the establishment of an Alaska Game Commission of five members, all residents of Alaska, and one of them the chief representative of the Biological Survey in the Territory. The resident commissioners appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture to enforce the law and the regulations promulgated by him will have available for their use the vast store of information on birds and mammals in the files of the department and the cooperation of the Biological Survey.

The appropriation of funds by Congress for the establishment of the Upper Mississippi River Wild Life and Fish Refuge, extending for about 300 miles between Rock Island, Ill., and Wabasha, Minn., has brought the number of Federal wild-life reservations under the jurisdiction of the Biological Survey to 70. These refuges and preserves for wild birds and animals are distributed over the United States, and in Porto Rico, Hawaii, and Alaska, and constitute an extensive phase of the conservation work of the bureau.

Copies of the annual report of the Bureau of Biological Survey may be had, while the supply lasts, by addressing the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

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